

August 22, 2003

FREMONT, CA - Today, Rep. Pete Stark (D-Fremont) announced the award of a \$39,848 federal grant to the City of Newark Fire Department under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. Stark assisted in obtaining the grant.

"These needed federal funds will give Newark and Union City's firefighters new tools to undertake difficult rescue operations and attend quickly to the needs of victims in any number of emergencies," Stark said. "This funding is also vital to the Bay Area's emergency preparedness efforts by making sure that Newark and Union City's first responders have the resources to effectively respond to a major earthquake or terrorist attack."

The Newark Fire Department will use this new grant funding to purchase so-called confined space rescue equipment. This specialized oxygen equipment and communications technology will allow rescuers to reach victims trapped in extremely tight confines with little mobility or access. The Fire Department's current equipment makes these rescues unsafe, if not impossible. Consequently, fire departments in surrounding jurisdictions are often called in to assist with such rescues, despite response times that can be an hour or longer.

Under the grant program's jurisdictional sharing directives, the neighboring Union City Fire Department will share equipment purchased with the grant funding.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration to provide vital resources to rural, urban and suburban fire departments. These funds are used by the nation's firefighters to increase the effectiveness of firefighting operations, fire fighter health and safety programs, new fire apparatus, emergency medical service programs, and fire prevention and safety programs.